

UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA
FACULDADE DE LETRAS



**The Relevance of Theatre for Development in
Ghanaian Education**

Emmanuel Baah-Fenning

**Tese orientada pelo Prof. Doutor David Michael Greer,
especialmente elaborada para a obtenção do grau de Mestre em
Estudos Ingleses e Americanos**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that with the exception of references to other works which has been duly acknowledged, this work is the result of my own research findings, and it has neither in part nor as a whole been presented elsewhere for another degree.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents,

Mr and Mrs. Baah-Fenning

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My utmost gratitude goes to Almighty God for granting me the knowledge to complete this programme.

My profound appreciation goes to my supervisor, David Michael Greer M.A. (Cantab.) PhD, for the assistance, comments and suggestions he offered me throughout my writing.

Many thanks go to my undergraduate classmate, Vivian Mawuli Gli, who helped me as a research assistant to gather some data I needed to complete the work.

Special thanks go to Dr. Akua Akumah, the current director of Abibigromma, the administration and members for their support with data and the necessary information.

RESUMO

Este estudo aborda a importância do Teatro para o Desenvolvimento (TfD) na educação do Gana. Analisa a emergência da educação formal no Gana antes da independência, o estabelecimento de estruturas e instituições educativas diferentes que valorizaram a educação até hoje. Iniciou-se com as *mission schools* e continuou com os *university colleges*, universidades, escolas superiores de educação, politécnicos, escolas primárias, *junior secondary schools*, (agora chamadas *junior high schools*) e *senior high schools* que levam ao certificado denominado West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

São analisadas contribuições acadêmicas sobre TfD para apoiar o objetivo da investigação. O TfD é apresentado e discutido como um dos módulos relevantes para a educação no Gana, devido à introdução de diversas políticas, encorajadas para valorizar o ensino e aprendizagem como uma forma de aquisição de conhecimento holística, quer nos setores formais quer nos informais. Para isso, este estudo foca-se na Abibigromma, a companhia de teatro residente da School of Performing Arts da Universidade do Gana, analisando projetos de TfD altamente desenvolvidos e apresentados desde a fundação da companhia. A sua história, contexto e contribuição para a educação e para a comunidade do Gana são apresentados e avaliados, seguidos da análise do mais recente do projeto de TfD da companhia. Recebem particular atenção a estética e elementos dos espetáculos que Abibigromma utiliza nos seus projetos TfD e que poderiam ser introduzidos nas instituições de educação formal para valorizar o impacto e aquisição de conhecimento na educação do Gana. A estética e os elementos foram analisados para demonstrar a relevância de TfD na educação do Gana, sendo este o objeto deste estudo. Com base nessas informações, são sugeridos possíveis projetos de investigação nessa área.

ABSTRACT

This research study looks at the relevance of Theatre for Development (TfD) in Ghanaian Education. It reviews the emergence of formal education in Ghana before independence, the establishment of different educational institutions and structures that have enhanced formal education to date, which began with mission schools, university colleges, full universities, teacher training colleges, polytechnics, primary schools, junior secondary schools, (now known as junior high schools) and senior secondary schools (with its certificate recognised as Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination: SSSCE but now recognised as senior high schools with its certificate recognised as West African Senior School Certificate Examination: WASSCE) Scholarly contributions on TfD are reviewed to support the objectives of the research. TfD is introduced and discussed as one of the relevant modules for Education in Ghana, due to the introduction of diverse policies which are encouraged to enhance teaching and learning as a holistic form of knowledge acquisition both in the formal, as well as the informal sectors in the country. In view of this, the study focuses on Abibigromma, the resident theatre company at the School of Performing Arts University of Ghana for their highly developed TfD projects they have carried out across the country since the company was founded. Their history, background and contribution to schooling and the Ghanaian community are presented and assessed, followed by analysis of the company's most recent TfD project. Performance aesthetics and features that Abibigromma employs in their TfD projects that could be introduced in the formal educational institution to enhance the impact and acquisition of knowledge in Ghanaian education have received particular attention. The aesthetics and features have been analysed to ascertain the relevance of TfD in Ghanaian education which is the objective of the research study and based on the findings recommendation have been made for future research projects in this field.

Keyword: Theatre for Development, Ghana, Education, *Abibigromma*, Performance features.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TfD	-Theatre for Development
NGO	-Non-Governmental Organisation
CPP	-Convention People's Party
PNDC	-Provisional National Defence Council
HND	-Higher National Diploma
GIJ	-Ghana Institute of Journalism
GIL	-Ghana Institute of Languages
IPS	-Institute of Professional Studies
UPS	-University of Professional Studies
GIMPA	-Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration
NAFTI	-National Film and Television Institute
IAS	-Institute of African Studies
RIPS	-Regional Institute of Population Studies
ACU	-Association of Commonwealth Conference
FUSSAG	-Federation of Universities Senior Staff Association of Ghana
ISAPS	-International Society for African Philosophy and Studies
RAFiP	-Rural and Agricultural Finance Programme
STI	-Science Technology and Innovation

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

“Education is the most effective means that society possesses for confronting the challenges of the future. Indeed, education will shape the world of tomorrow. Progress increasingly depends upon the products of educated minds and instincts are needed not only in laboratories and research institutes but in every walk of life. Indeed, access to education is the *sine qua non* for effective participation in the life of the modern world at all levels. Education is, to be certain, not the whole answer to every problem. But education in its broadest sense must be a vital part of all efforts to imagine and create new relations among people and to foster greater respect for the needs of the environment” (UNESCO, 1998). This is the reason why it is necessary to introduce diverse modules to enhance teaching and learning at all levels and in all environments. As a result of that, I propose that participatory methodologies such as the Theatre for Development modules be employed in education, which I see as highly relevant for our generation and the future of Education in Ghana.

1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Ghanaian Education has advanced in diverse areas and levels as a result of the influence of technology and developmental mechanisms. This seems to suit the development process evolving in the country. Statistics clearly show that the educational sector has advanced, especially with the advent of technology and new development mechanisms that are gradually being introduced. Research on Ghanaian education has been geared towards diverse educational policies to enhance

knowledge on issues leading to a more favourable and productive performance both on the part of the educator and the educated. In this research, I explore a new area and identify its relevance in Ghanaian education: Theatre for Development. I shall focus on Abibigromma, the Resident Theatre Group of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana. This group is well known in Ghana for its numerous achievements through both educational and developmental theatre projects.

Theatre for Development is aimed at educating society through sensitization, awareness creation and also communicating developmental messages to target communities (Epskamp, 2006). Formal and informal institutions, NGOs, government agencies, including many scholarly educators (teachers, lecturers, researchers and professors) make use of Theatre for Development for their work on diverse issues. Theatre for Development uses music, dance and drama to create awareness of a problem, issues, grievances, or to send a word of caution or, better still, to convey information for the purpose of education and development. Theatre for Development dates back to the 1970s (Epskamp, 2006), where it was essentially a product of urbanisation and westernisation processes. Now, however, its scope has expanded and also draw inspiration directly from indigenous African dramatic traditions to express and highlight contemporary problems in society and suggest solutions. This is true of the Ghanaian concert party tradition (King, 2002), the Nigerian Folk Opera (Beier, 1953), the Chikwakwa Theatre of Zambia (Chifunyese, 1977) and the Kenya Kamiriithu 'People's Theatre.' (Ndigirigi, 2007) There are practitioners in other African countries who have used TfD extensively at workshops, conferences, and collaborations with companies or individuals. Oga Steve Abah at the drama department of the Ahamdu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria used TfD as the resource for a rural community's conscientization through the Samaru Project in 1980-81 (Abah & Etherton, 1982). In Lesotho, Zakes Mda has championed TfD causes,

which he terms “Theatre for Conscientization” (Manuh & Sutherland-Addy, 2013). Penina Mlama has also done extensive research and projects at the department of Fine and Performing Art at Dares Salaam University in Tanzania.

In earlier impressions of literary drama in Africa, the theatre was seen as an alien form which was totally subservient to Western notions of drama. This seemed almost a disloyal ideology to Africa. But now critical opinion has indicated that Africa has always been central to its ultimate vision and that it has in fact been supportive of the aspirations and longings of African people. In the post-Independence era, particularly after the sixties, literary drama in Africa drew its vision, themes and techniques from the continent's own longstanding creative traditions, struggles and experiences of the people. It is imperative here to state that theatre has been fundamental and a bedrock of education in Ghana. It is perhaps the most appealing and easiest way to communicate with the masses. This research will focus on Abibigromma’s origins, aims and objectives, educational projects, their achievement so far, and their relevance in educating the Ghanaian populace through Theatre for Development.

1.3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Over the years, the educational system in most institutions has followed a singular structure at all levels. With time, there have been issues with the academic performances of students who graduate at every level from the Ghanaian education institutions. This has been as a result of their organisational performance output at work after they have completed school. This is also affecting project implementation for development. As a result, there is a great challenge to the educational structures of the country, as to how some of these issues can be applied to enhance the academic and professional performance of the average Ghanaian acquiring or imparting knowledge in

diverse forms be it formal or informal. Besides the other private sectors, NGOs and Government institutions are always facing limitations identifying diverse implementation modules of transferring information to the masses. This, in a way, affects the way of life of the people for developmentally sustainable results. This has necessitated the exploration of a new strategy to help in Ghanaian education as a whole, hence my examination of Theatre for Development's relevance in the country's education system.

1.4. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The general objective of the study is to look at the relevance of Theatre for Development in Ghanaian education. The specific objectives are:

- To assess the current educational system in Ghana
- To examine the educational content of Theatre for Development
- To assess Theatre for Development as an educational module.
- Review the works of Abibigromma that have produced educational benefits.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTION

The questions this research seeks to answer are as follows:

- What needs innovation within the current educational system in Ghana?
- What is the educational content in Theatre for Development?
- Why should Theatre for Development be classified as an educational module?

1.6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to meet the set objectives of any research, it is important to be well equipped with the proper measuring instruments and data collection tools to answer the questions the research is addressing. It is thus imperative that the appropriate approach is adopted and designed, according to what best suits the research objectives. For Babbie (Babbie, 2005), the general purpose of research is to explore, describe, or explain phenomena. This study is an exploratory one. Due to the topic, it is deemed important to avoid reducing the study of the relevance of Theatre for Development in Ghanaian education to a quantitative approach. Therefore, by employing a qualitative methodological approach, the thoughts, feelings, and behaviour of informants will be captured and the social and situational contexts of the phenomena under investigation accounted for (Schouten, 1991). Qualitative methods are best used when attempting to understand a social phenomenon about which little is known (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and are considered the most appropriate in discovering underlying motivations, feelings, values, attitudes, and perceptions about social phenomena.

It is thus important to integrate a phenomenological approach, which is amenable to qualitative research as the study explores the various aspects of Theatre for Development's relevance in Ghanaian education. Phenomenology, as an approach, is rooted in early 20th Century European philosophy. It involves the use of dense description and close analysis of lived experience to understand how meaning is created through the embodied perception of the participants themselves. A phenomenological lens will give a deeper appreciation of lived experiences by exposing assumptions about ways of knowing (Starcks & Trinidad, 2007). Consequently, the researcher is able to analyse why Theatre for Development is relevant in Ghanaian education.

1.7. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this research is to have an educational impact on society, and especially to aid scholars in discovering the relevance of Theatre for Development for Ghanaian education. Generally, this will

- Help assess and document some of the Theatre for Development activities undertaken by Abibigromma
- Propose ways institutions, whether governmental or NGOs, can use Theatre for Development in their educational projects disseminating information to citizens.
- Introduce Theatre for Development as a recommended educational methodology.

1.8. THE ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study assesses the relevance of Theatre for Development in Ghanaian education by examining one of the major theatre companies in Ghana that is well known for its many years of engaging in Theatre for Development projects for diverse purposes, including education. This is done through analysing interviews with some of the directors and members of the company. The study is comprised of five chapters. Chapter One serves as an introduction to the entire research work, giving an overview. It introduces the background of the study, objectives, problems, research questions, and methods, as well as outlining the significance of the study. Chapter Two provides a detailed account of the Ghanaian formal educational structure and the Theatre for Development concepts and will review relevant educational and Theatre for Development theories that support this research from a global perspective, which will finally focus on the Ghanaian context. Chapter Three discusses Abibigromma, their background and works from their origin to date, in the context

of Theatre for Development. Chapter Four will discuss the pedagogical content of the use of Theatre for Development in Ghana, with reference to Abibigromma's projects. Chapter Five will present the study's findings, limitations, recommendations, and my conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a detailed account of the literature on the history of the Ghanaian formal educational structure and the Theatre for Development concept. It underlines the research claims for the relevance of Theatre for Development in Ghanaian education.

2.1. GHANAIAN EDUCATION

Education in Ghana during the pre-colonial period was formal but not institutionalised. Informal Ghanaian education depended on elders, parents and older children in the community or siblings. They were all grouped together in one category to give moral, ethical and religious instructions to the younger ones for the purpose of training, teaching and nurturing them to become better citizens in the societies in which they found themselves.

At the early stage, the child was taught how to speak the local language, mostly the dialect of the father or the mother. At home, children were taught how to eat at the table, greet and behave in front of elders and when to get involved in their conversations, among many other aspects. When children reached the initiation period, there was a ceremony and during such times they were taught stories about their ancestors, heritage and myths of their cultural beliefs. The elders and clan leaders would teach these young adults how to behave maturely in society. The young girls were taught how to keep themselves healthy during menstruation, how to cook and how to be a good wife and take care of babies. Whereas the young men were taught how to use a gun for the purpose

of hunting, farming, fishing and some craftwork, so they could take care of their families when they married. These young men were empowered to be workers, heads and providers of their families through continuous training. In local communities, the culture was structured from a patriarchal perspective, hence all or almost every leadership role was seen as masculine, meaning men were always the leaders in doing everything. In terms of training and apprenticeships, the young men mostly learnt their father's trade so they could easily take over from them. A young man could also go into an apprenticeship for professional skills in carving, blacksmithery, pottery, carpentry, goldsmithery or drumming. Generally, the only apprenticeship available to young women was in pottery or basketry. Anyone who completed their apprenticeship successfully would be supplied with capital and sometimes equipped with tools to start their business. This was the responsibility of their fathers or guardians. It should be remembered that this kind of informal education had been in existence since pre-colonial times and in Ghana today, it is still practised, while formal education is received in established institutions.

Formal education was introduced in Ghana as a result of the arrival of the missionaries, westerners or colonial masters. It was introduced because foreigners needed to overcome the language barrier and communicate with the indigenous people they came to meet. So as to be able to communicate effectively with the local people, they started teaching them basic reading and writing skills. They, therefore, opened schools that began in the castles around the coastal areas in Ghana, mostly in Cape Coast and Greater Accra Region. Teaching was done by the chaplains who were in the castles. The first students of these schools were the sons of European merchants, or of a few wealthy indigenous men who were living in the urban areas and some local women who were also doing trading business with the Europeans. They were taught to read, write, to do arithmetic and to study the Bible, which gradually became an instructional manual for them. From 1821, Ghana,

then known as the Gold Coast, experienced vast and diverse development due to the introduction of this formal education. Hence the educational authorities decided to open more schools across the country. These schools were financed by the government through the generation of public funds (Foster, 1965). This move created the opportunity for the importation of western literature into Ghana, which was used as the academic syllabus for formal education in schools at the time. All the schools that were established were being run, furnished, maintained and governed by the colonial masters with institutional instruction from Britain.

By 1841, all the government schools in Ghana were structured in line with the mission schools that had been established in the country. The merchant companies did not show much concern for the welfare of the inhabitants in the hinterland but the missionaries did. They reached out to them. Methodist, Bremen, Wesleyan and Basel missionaries began educating the indigenous people and converting them in the process around the 1820s. As a result of this, a lot of Methodist and Presbyterian schools were opened in the southern parts of the country. This development brought about a student population of about 5000 in 139 mission schools at the primary level by 1881 (Falola & Salm, 2002). In 1843, Basel missionaries founded a boys' school and, in 1847, they also founded one for girls. Moreover, they set up a teacher training college and a catechist's seminary in 1843 (Antwi, 1992). By the end of the nineteenth century, some private schools had founded secondary schools. Due to this move, new educational policies were implemented by the colonial government, improving education in the country. These policies opened the door to training colleges for teachers, more educational opportunities for girls and an increase in secondary schools. Unfortunately, the intake of girls into schools was low as the mindset of Ghanaians was slow to change in this respect. In 1957, the political victory of the Convention People's Party (CPP), bringing independence to Ghana, expedited the educational development plans for the

country. This was because the leadership of the CPP were all educated Ghanaians and therefore believed that formal education was paramount to the development of the country. The CPP then started a free compulsory education system that was designed to provide universal education for every Ghanaian. Every government since then has implemented one policy after another in the pursuit of improving the quality of education in Ghana. In modern day Ghana, the educational structure starts at kindergarten, and then moves through the primary or basic level and then junior high school, which used to be called the junior secondary school, before branching out into teacher and nursing training colleges, technical secondary schools, polytechnics and various universities across the country. Since independence, the educational system in Ghana has been supervised by the Ministry of Education. The mandate of the ministry is to see to the provision of relevant and quality education for all Ghanaians, with a focus on those who are disadvantaged in some way. This enables them to acquire some skills that will make them functionally literate and productive. This strategy is believed to help facilitate poverty alleviation and as well promote a rapid socio-economic growth in the country (Ministry of Education, n.d.).

Records indicate that the first school established for higher education in Ghana was the Achimota School. The foundation stone for this school and its college was laid on 4th March 1924. It was officially opened by the then colonial leader, Governor Sir Gordon Guggisberg in 1927. The school had a kindergarten, primary, secondary, intermediate schools and a teacher training college. When the Second World War began, the school started offering pre-university education courses, engineering and some external degree courses from the University of London, where the first student obtained his degree in 1935 (History of Achimota School, n.d.). Due to this progress, the British Government then established the Asquith and Eliot Commission to undertake an investigation into how feasible higher education was, and whose recommendation helped set up a

University in British West Africa. The Asquith and Eliot Commission produced two reports on the objectives of the task given to them. In the first report, the Commission recommended that two universities should be founded in the Gold Coast and Nigeria. The second report recommended only one university, and in Nigeria. This was because, Nigeria, at the time, had a population of 20 million. After careful assessment of the two reports, the British government accepted the second report's recommendation to establish a university in Nigeria. Unfortunately, efforts to implement this were severely hindered by the people of the Gold Coast, with the protest led by Dr J.B. Danquah.¹ As a result, the people of the Gold Coast counselled their government to inform the British government that the Gold Coast was capable of supporting a university college. The British government accepted this assurance and agreed to found the University College of Gold Coast. On 11th August 1948, the university was founded by ordinance. The purpose was to provide and promote university education, learning and research in the Gold Coast.² The first principal chosen to head the university was Mr David Mowbray Balme, whom the current main library at the University of Ghana, Legon, was later named after. The then university campus was located at Achimota and later moved to Legon. At that time, the university college council sent an application to the government for legislation. This was to convert the university college into a full university with independent authority to award its own degrees, which took place in the 1960-1961 academic year. The result of this request was granted and on 1st October 1961, the University College of the Gold Coast was legally separated independently from the University of London by an Act of Parliament. It was after this that its name was changed to the University of Ghana. From the 1950s,

¹ Dr. J.B. Danquah was a contemporary scholar and politician. He played a significant role in Ghana's independence and was extremely active in promoting education for girls.

² For more information, see <http://www.ug.edu.gh/index1.php?linkid=243&sublinkid=72>

Ghana was led by Prime Minister, Dr Kwame Nkrumah. Nkrumah realised that education was important in building Ghana's economy and human resources, so the second institution of higher learning was founded in Kumasi: Kumasi College of Technology, established in October 1951 by an Act of Parliament. In 1952, it was officially opened with 200 resident teacher training students, who were transferred from the Achimota College (Antwi, 1992). The college was later upgraded into a full university and renamed the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in 1961 by an act of parliament. This was done on the recommendation of the Commission of University Education. The CPP government implemented an Education Act in 1961 that made primary and middle school education free and compulsory. The increase in the number of pupils called for an increase in primary and secondary teachers. The result was a general improvement in Ghanaian education. This encouraged the government to establish the third institution in 1962, the University College of Cape Coast in the Central Region. In 1967, it was incorporated by the UCCC NLC Decree. This took effect from October 1966 and affiliated the new institution to the University of Ghana (Antwi, 1992). In October 1971, the University College of Cape Coast became a fully-fledged university. Its primary purpose was to produce graduate teachers in the Arts and Sciences who would teach in the secondary schools, teacher training colleges, and technical institutions. In May 1992, the government established the University of Development Studies. The purpose was to blend the academic world with the community in order to provide constructive interaction between the two different settings for the total development of the Northern part of Ghana specifically, and the country as a whole. This was in line with the PNDC Law 279, section 279 of the Ghana constitution. The university is a multi-campus, planned for and dedicated to development and research training. In the same year, the government established the University College of Education in Winneba, in central Ghana. Back in the 1960s, polytechnic

institutions in Ghana were developed as technical schools to train human resources for the emerging Ghanaian industries. From 1991, there were reforms in the tertiary education sector and the second cycle institutions under the supervision of the Ghana Education Service. All these were upgraded into tertiary institutions. They offered programmes ranging from one to three years and awarded Higher National Diplomas (HND) certificates. Ghana currently has a large number of private universities and a few professional institutions. Professional institutions include the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ), the Ghana Institute of Languages (GIL), the National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI), the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), and the Institute of Professional Studies (IPS). Among the private universities are Valley View University, the Central University, the Methodist University, Regent University College of Science and Technology, Wisconsin University and Zenith University. The programmes offered in these universities range from business, natural sciences, and social sciences to the arts. It is being observed that the form of education that began is generated around a concept that does not allow the student to explore from his or her perspective and much less engage in a collaborative activity with the teachers. This is what has been termed as the Banking Concept of Education.

2.2. PAULO FREIRE'S "BANKING" CONCEPT OF EDUCATION

As Tim Prenkti and Sheila Preston (2009) have expressed it, experimentation becomes desirable “in education where ideas of child-centred learning and a problem-posing curriculum begin to take hold” (Prentki & Preston, 2009). As a result of this, “education ... becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depository and the teacher is the depositor. [Unfortunately,] instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students

patiently receive, memorise, and repeat. This is the “banking” concept of education in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing and storing the deposits. They do, it is true, have the opportunity to be collectors or cataloguers of the things they store. But in the last analysis, it is the people themselves who have filed away through lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system” (Freire, 2011). In what Paulo Freire describes as the “banking” educational concept, there are a number of undesirable educational attitudes and practices:

- a. The teacher teaches and the students are taught;
- b. The teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
- c. The teacher thinks and the students are thought about;
- d. The teacher talks and the students listen – meekly;
- e. The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
- f. The teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;
- g. The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;
- h. The teacher chooses the programme content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
- i. The teacher confuses the authority of her knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she or he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;
- j. The teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects” (Freire, 2011).

From this educational perspective, therefore, the students have no choice but to adapt and manage to understand, learn, and participate in delivering at the end of the day. That is why Freire says “the more students work at storing deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view or reality deposited in them” (Freire, 2011).

2.3. THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT

From a general perspective, Theatre for Development (TfD) aims to explore new ways of doing things. Its aims are to empower the voiceless to speak out, pull individuals out of their comfort zones to do new things: make discoveries, challenge negative attitudes, allow far more interactive, participatory and collaborative methodologies in evaluating, conscientising, challenging and suggesting ways forward in promoting rural African development. Theatre for Development seeks to build a bridge between theatre and development. This is achieved when experts use theatre to educate, inform and communicate to communities that will, in the long run, bring about change at regional and national levels. This is done with the aim of challenging individuals and communities to consider other alternative ways of looking at things such as problems, traditions and mindsets, among many others. The issues targeted are those facing individuals, communities and the nation at local and global levels. These are the possible fertile grounds on which theatre thrives. It is a discipline that allows improvisation, creativity, all of which equally promote learning, concentration, flexibility, productivity and development. It changes the status quo, by tearing up stereotypes and breaking down the wall that oppresses and limits disadvantaged people either spiritually, psychically, psychologically, physically, mentally or economically (Boal, 2000).

For this reason, Ann Malamah-Thomas says that Theatre for Development “if properly used, ... can perhaps be the most efficacious instrument for conscientising and enabling the masses and for propagating development messages using the people’s language, idioms and the art forms”

(Malamah-Thoman, 1987) As explained by Tom Prenkti, he says Theatre for Development:

theatre used in the service of development aims; a tool available to development agencies which pursue the goals of self-development and an improved quality of life of all people whose material conditions leave them vulnerable to hostile, predatory forces, both natural and human. In other words, it is an instrument in the

struggle to help such people become the subjects, and cease to be the objects, of their own histories” (Prenkti, 1998).

In view of this, it can be said that Theatre for Development stands out as one of the few powerful engines promoting development in education. Kees Epskamp says “Theatre for Development is about learning together through the arts and using the arts to inform and to teach” (Epskamp, 2006).

2.3.1. DEVELOPMENT

‘Development’ is a highly debatable term defined differently by various scholars. Here, however, it could be defined or explained according to the perspective of Zakes Mda. He writes that “development is both a process and a goal in bringing about social change in order to improve the living standards of the people” (Mda, 1993). Therefore, we might say that there is no single accepted interpretation of what social change entails or a generally accepted norm to measure people’s improved living standards. Development can then be described as the ability to identify one’s potentialities and translate them into life-giving and life-improving elements that are beyond the self and to the advantage of all or a larger community. A new perspective is that of the Maratholi Traveling Theatre group, which states that “development is a process through which a society achieves greater control of its social, economic and political destiny. The process allows the individual members of society to have control of their institutions, which leads to a liberation from all forms of domination and dependency” (Mda, 1993). It is from this understanding that Wolfgang Sach also emphasises that “development is much more than just a socio-economic endeavour; [but rather] it is a perception which moulds reality, a myth which comforts societies, and fantasy which unleashes passions” (Sachs, 1999).

2.3.2. THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT AS A PROCESS

Kees Epskamp sees Theatre for Development as a process that is “people-centred and learner oriented.” During such TfD workshops, there are individual changes at the community level. The workshop has a didactic format used for problem-solving purposes at the community level. On the other hand, during such TfD performances, the working process of creating a TfD play is aimed at creating social cohesion at the community level. This is achieved through the use of Forum Theatre or Community Theatre. van Ervan (2001) explains that

Community Theatre yields grassroots performances in which the participating community residents themselves perform and have substantial input in the creative process. Its material and aesthetic forms always emerge directly (if not inclusively) from the community whose interests tries to express. Community Theatre is thus a potent art form allowing once silent (or silenced) groups of people to add their voices to increasingly diverse and intricately interrelated local, regional, national and international cultures (van Ervan, 2001).

It helps in analysing local problems and contributes in a creative way towards local awareness raising and problem-solving by exploring various solutions and courses of action. It also links us to the human desires to answer questions, solve a problem or improve something and this is the common way in which people learn. For example, a teacher challenges pupils by providing learning activities and experiences encouraging them to question their existing ideas or conceptual frameworks and these stipulate thoughts, inquiry and action. In this way, effective education enables students to connect ideas, people and objects and to link local, national and global events and phenomena (Epskamp, 2006).

2.3.3. THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT AS A PRODUCT

As a product, it is “message-centred and sender-oriented.” It focuses on performance and these performances serve as a means to an end. This is focused on behavioural change in primary stakeholders by means of persuasive communication. There is also the entertainment-educational aspect. Such performances are developmental or political messages and advocacy (Epskamp, 2006). The performances are messages rather than learner-oriented and used for promotional and educational purposes. This is done through theatre to inform people of the importance of developmental issues at both local and national levels, to persuade them to change their behaviour. Through this, it serves as political advocacy and a mobilisation campaign to support national development. Through the live performances, people get the opportunity to discuss and learn. As a result, these performances act as teaching materials to inform, create awareness and stimulate discussion, as well as bringing people together to offer them opportunities for social interaction and decision making. It serves to galvanise people into action.

The works of Theatre for Development as a Process and a Product have had a lot of influence in many countries in African including Ghana. This has promoted different forms of development for years, which is supported by evidence from the University of Ghana.

2.4. THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN GHANAIAAN EDUCATION

The educational sector has both formal and informal distinctions. Using Theatre for Development in education helps learners in diverse ways. They are able to use their aesthetic understanding to respond, reflect on and evaluate issues (Epskamp, 2006). In October 1962, the University of Ghana opened the School of Performing Arts as part of the Institute of African Studies. This is to link the

university to the National Theatre Movement in promoting education in the Theatre disciplines. In 1986, the School of Performing Arts got some financial support from the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) and therefore separated from the Institute of African Studies (Abgodeka, 1998). The purpose of establishing the school was to teach, train and supply professional theatre practitioners for Ghana's growing theatre industry and also help to promote the Ghanaian tradition in music, dance and drama. In 1987, the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government took over the University of Ghana Drama Studio, which was then located in Accra. The purpose was to build a bigger auditorium to be used as the National Theatre. The government, therefore, constructed a new drama studio on the university campus as compensation for the School of Performing Arts. The studio was named Efua Theodora Sutherland Drama Studio in honour of Madam Efua Theodora Sutherland, who was a great contributor to Ghanaian Theatre history. The school has three main departments: music, dance and theatre arts. It offers Diplomas, B.A.s and Master's degrees in all three departments. The school is run by three departmental heads, a director oversees all the three departments and an artistic director, in charge of the drama studio. It also has a resident dance company called the Ghana Dance Ensemble and resident theatre company, 'Abibigromma'. It is this latter group that is the research case study. From its inception under the headship of Efua Theodora Sutherland and Joe de Graft, the theatre arts department has attempted to train professionals and develop a Ghanaian theatre that will derive its strength and authenticity from roots firmly planted in the true traditions of the people of Ghana. Abibigromma has been engaged in diverse educational projects to realise this aim through a Theatre for Development approach.

CHAPTER THREE

ABIBIGROMMA- THE RESIDENT THEATRE COMPANY OF THE SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS – U.G.

Chapter Three gives a general history of Abibigromma. It presents their background and works to date, and identifies their programmes for Theatre for Development in educational institutions and the Ghanaian community. It also includes a report of their programming since January 2016 to give a general perspective of the diverse performance scope of Abibigromma's activities.

3.1. ABIBIGROMMA'S BACKGROUND

Abibigromma is the resident theatre group for the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon, and was established in May 1983 (Adu-Gyamfi, 2013). It was founded to serve as a laboratory for performing artists, for research purposes and experimentation. Their aim is the promotion of African Theatre. The name of the group was coined from two distinct Akan words, which have been put together as one word. The word or term Akan

is used to embrace the following linguistic and cultural people of Ghana: Ahanta, Akuapem, Akwamu, Akyem, Asante, Assin, Aowin, Bono, Dankyria, Fante, Kwawu, Sefwi, Twifo and Wassa. These people inhabit the three Regions of Asante, Bono-Ahafo and Central [of Ghana] predominantly. They also constitute the majority ethnic group in the Eastern and Western regions [of Ghana.] The term AKAN has been variously interpreted... A collective linguistic term Akan, has come to be applied to the various dialects (Nkansa-Kyeremateng, 1999).

Therefore the term ‘Akan’ is used to identify the groups of people in the above mentioned three regions of Ghana, as well as the dialect they speak. Geographically “the *Akan*-speaking peoples occupy the southern half of the Gold Coast [now Ghana], parts of Togoland and the south-east corner of the French Ivory Coast” (Manoukian, 1950). The first word is “Abibiman” (Asiedu, 2011), which means ‘African’ and the second word is “Agromma”, which means ‘Players.’ There is also a third component of the word, which underpinned the objectives of the group: “Abibigro” (Asiedu, 2011) is a word that is closely translated as “African Theatre.”

Abibigromma reflects greatly on the commitment to create a modern African Theatre that is drawn from and feeds on the accumulated resources and heritage of oral and written performance literature in Africa (Adu-Gyamfi, 2013). In order to promote cultural cooperation for development between Ghana and other nations, the group has travelled around Africa and Europe with diverse sophisticated performances that portray Ghana’s rich cultural heritage at international platforms, festivals, conferences and fairs. All this has been possible as a result of the bilateral efforts between the University of Ghana and other institutions across the world. Abibigromma’s mission, since its inception, has been to promote and research into Ghanaian and other African arts.

The group seeks to create performances on stage, from both scripts and non-scripted works, which present the unique social-cultural drama, music and dance inspired by the oral and written literature of Ghana and Africa as a whole. As stated above, Abibigromma’s aims are to engage in research, performance and experimentation of Ghanaian and other African art forms, by critically focusing on their roots in society, as well as their development across the world. The group also want to develop appropriate professional attitudes, systems and techniques in theatre management, and provide an adequate and effective outlet for the creativity of the School of Performing Arts’ professional staff. They offer the school internships with a leaning towards theatre work. They

also organise programmes and do constant performances to create an artistic antenna for gauging the nation's response to creative and cultural experiments, as well as feeding the responses back into the university to enhance the school's capacity to respond to national and cultural needs. They purposely seek to cultivate in the school, and other educational institutions, the kind of education that will harness the creativity and knowledge of people, inspiring them to look forward to a great future in theatre.

Administratively, the head of Abibigromma is appointed by the Vice- Chancellor of the University of Ghana. Each appointment is for two years, which can be renewed, once, for a second term. The administrative body of Abibigromma is made up of the Artistic Director, the General Stage Manager, the Costumier, the Public Relations Officer, the Administrative Assistant and the company of Performing Artists. Since 1991, Abibigromma has been operating without a management board but, currently, all its activities are being monitored by a Management Committee of a group of people who serve as the Executive Board of the Faculty of Arts, at the University of Ghana.

When it comes to engagement opportunities, Abibigromma collaboratively works with other institutions and organisations in order to arrive at acceptable and meaningful production. They use their services to enhance the image of any institution to launch, relaunch and market both product and services. They extensively use Theatre for Development (TfD) for diverse community sensitisation programmes across the country and beyond. Abibigromma also creates and crafts unique dramatic improvisations to suit a specific performance tailored to the institution's needs. They undertake cultural entertainment by providing authentic and exciting music, dances and drama performances from all the regions of Ghana, as well as other parts of Africa.

They perform musical theatre, dance drama, choreography and contemporary dance pieces and dramatic performances at functions such as the university's congregation, convocation, matriculation, organisational dinners, cooperate cocktails, conferences and summits at both local and international levels. Abibigromma has thus established links with other higher educational institutions in the nation and internationally.

These organisational collaborations contribute to the development of arts and culture, as well as reaching out to primary and secondary schools through theatre performances. This enriches the cultural curriculum, encourages the appreciation of literature, and stimulates awareness of the moral and educational values of traditional arts. Through their learning and research objectives, students who have some interest in participating in any of the group's dance music and dance may find limited attachment or internship opportunities due to the working schedule of the group. Through training, Abibigromma helps to prepare students, as well as churches in cultural performances for various occasions, such as Speech and Prize Giving Day, the Christmas Nativity, and Passion plays at Easter; not forgetting children's performance groups.

The success of the organisation as a theatre company has largely depended on its managerial and organisational structure, and how well the director is able to harness both the material and human resources that have been made available to them to attain success. Abibigromma has been a yardstick for measuring excellence and has maintained its professionalism and competence. In conceptualising the works of Abibigromma, Mohammed Ben Abdallah, one of Ghana's historic and most prolific playwrights, who has contributed immensely to Ghanaian theatre and the founding of the School of Performing Arts, as well as Abibigromma, has said that his works and

other theatre practitioners' works follow on from Efua Theodora Sutherland's *Anansegoro*³ (Komla, 2014). Efua Theodora Sutherland is one of the most instrumental educationists who significantly contributed to Ghanaian theatre. She began a project called the Ghana Experimental Theatre Project. It started with an experimental troupe and their first performances were Ananse stories. Gradually the project developed and was named the Ghana Drama Studio. In 1961, the project was to a different location. The stage for the project was structured in a round pattern to resemble a traditional Ghanaian courtyard. The idea of adopting this pattern was to ignore the division between actors and audiences. These projects opened a new way for Ghanaian theatre artists and practitioners to connect their works with the Ghanaian community socially. Efua Sutherland later became a research associate at the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana. She took this opportunity and introduced a syllabus for drama. The syllabus places a lot of emphasis on how oral traditions are connected to modern life. As a result, the drama students were highly encouraged to engage themselves with the communities around to gather materials and information to help their studies. The reason was that, in doing so, the students would form a connection between their academic environment and the local communities in which they lived. The project was highly successful and this brought about the creation of Theatre for Development, as it has come to be known within the Ghanaian community. These occurrences are what has

³ *Anansegoro* is a modernized storytelling which was developed by Theodora Efua Sutherland after Ghana gained independence, around 1960s. This type of storytelling combines Ghanaian traditional storytelling techniques with western theatrical conventions of forms. This style features a storyteller as a character in the play who communicates directly with the listeners or audience with the presence of a chorus who also comment on the actions that takes place. In her forward to her play *The Marriage of Anansewa* (1975), she explains that "there is in existence some specialist groups who have given it [the stories Ananse told] a full theatrical expression with established conventions. It is this system that I have developed and classified as *Anansegoro*. (Sutherland, 1975) In the performance, music and dance are used interchangeably as the story is told. Usually, the story is centred on the Ghanaian folklore legend and trickster called Ananse. Efua Sutherland describe him that "Ananse is artistically, a medium for society to criticise itself. The stories are parables, wherein Ananse overreaches himself, achieving successes that are 'doubtful and temporary.' He is a well-known Ghanaian folklore character that the audience recognise.

demonstrated the importance of performance groups to research and has laid the foundations for Tfd modules in Ghana.

3.2. ABIBIGROMMA'S INSTITUTIONAL /ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

At the Institute of African Studies, the Arts courses taken in their PhD programme encompass literature, drama, religion and ethnomusicology. Within these areas, students are attached to some organisations in these fields of study, with Abibigromma being one. The purpose is for the students to observe and participate in their performances. This is to help them work on their assignments, as well as engage them in different types of real events to complement their area of specialisation (Institute of African Studies). Some of the students completing the undergraduate level at the School of Performing Arts apply to Abibigromma and work with them during their National Service period and, after completion, some are invited to join the company if there is an opportunity at that point.

3.3. ABIBIGROMMA'S COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES

In 1983, Mohamed Ben Abdallah spearheaded the founding of Abibigromma and he served as the group's first Artistic Director. He used the opportunity to direct some of his own plays with the group on several occasions. He also contributed greatly to the development of performance artists in Abibigromma, which led to the formation of another resident National Theatre drama group, also called Abibigromma.

Beyond its [Abibigromma's] original aesthetic mandate, the group is also engaged in using drama as an effective tool of intervention for social and behavioural

change, by reaching out to the community, raising awareness on and facilitating the search for lasting solutions to ragging social-economic and civic issues that militate against steady development and which therefore require attitudinal change. (Cultural Institutions and Agencies, 2006).

To date, Abibigromma has been involved in lots of TfD projects in numerous communities across the country.

3.4. ABIBIGROMMA'S PROGRAMMES SINCE JANUARY 2016

The section below gives an account of Abibigromma's programmes that have used theatre performances for educational and developmental purposes in the formal educational institutions, and in collaboration with other organisations for developmental purposes. It outlines the programmes that Abibigromma have undertaken since 2016. This is to help identify the core objectives of their specific programmes that are connected to the issues of using theatre arts for development purposes relevant to education in Ghana, which is the target of this research.

Table 1. List of programmes by Abibigromma since January 2016

DATE	PROGRAMME	ACTIVITY	VENUE
January –June 2016	Rural and Agricultural Finance Programme (RAFiP) BY Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning	TfD	All the ten regions in Ghana
21 ST March 2016	Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ) graduation ceremony	Dance	GIJ
2 nd May 2016	Dazzling Heights Events – Kindermania Carnival	A drama sketch titled <i>Sacrifice</i>	Burma Camp Leisure Centre
8 th July 2016	Book launch, <i>Positioning Ghana: Challenges and Innovation</i>	Dance	Maison Francaise, Modern Languages, UG

27 th July 2016	African Universities International Conference	Dance drama	Accra International Conference Centre
25 th August 2016	Voice for Change (V4C) Partnership launch	Drama	Mensvic Hotel, Accra
3 rd September 2016	Ama Ata Aidoo Short Story Competition by Centre for Gender Studies, UG	Excerpts of <i>The Dilemma of a Ghost</i>	African Regent Hotel
8 th – 10 th September 2016	<i>The Discombobulation of a Rookie Patriot</i> by Femi Osofisan	Drama production	National Theatre
29 th September 2016	<i>Such is Life</i> by Femi Osofisan	Drama production	National Theatre
1 st March 2017	Launching of Air France in Ghana	Dance	Kempinski, Accra
6 TH April 2016	Matriculation ceremony at UG City Campus	Dance	UG City Campus
11 th May 2016	Book launch	Dance	Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research's conference room
12 th July 2016	Engineers Association meeting	Dance	Anglican church, UG
15 th July 2016	Ghana Local Government Awards Night	Dance	Capital View Hotel, Koforidua
19 th July 2016	5 th Regional Institute of Population Studies (RIPS) Climate Change Conference on Africa	Dance	UG Law School auditorium
27 th July	Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) Conference	Dance	International Conference Centre, Accra
2 nd August 2016	Federation of Universities Senior Staff Association of Ghana (FUSSAG)	Dance	UG
11 TH August 2016	International Society for African Philosophy and Studies (ISAPS)	Dance	Great Hall, UG
26 th July 2016	African Universities for the Study of Religion	Dance	Accra
26 th July 2016	<i>In the Chest of a Woman</i> by Efo Kodjo Mawugbe at the Girls Guide Conference	Drama production	Accra

26 th July 2016	90 th Anniversary of Calvary Methodist Church	Dance	Calvary Methodist Church, Adabraka, Accra
3 rd November	Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ)	Dance	GIJ
24 th November 2016	10 th Anniversary of the School of Pharmacy, College of Health Science of the University of Ghana	Dance	School of Pharmacy, College of Health Science of the University of Ghana
16 th December 2016	Alternative African Christmas Nativity by Nii Sowa	Dance Drama	Efua Sutherland Drama Studio, School of Performing Art, UG
13 th December 2016	Opening of HFC Bank, Legon Branch	Dance	Banking Court, Legon
26 th July 2016	National Science Technology and Innovation (STI) Fair	Dance	Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) conference room at the University of Ghana
26 th September 2016	Youth Inclusive Entrepreneurial Development Initiative for Employment (YIEDIE) learning event for the annual conference of global communities in Ghana	Dramatic sketch	Royal Senchi, Akosombo

From the list above, it can be seen that Abibigromma's activities are diverse in scope and cover all the branches of performing arts. Unfortunately, the company has engaged in only one specifically TfD event during the period of this research, although it ran for 6 months (January – June 2016) in all 10 regions of the country. This is because Abibigromma is not solely a company for TfD programmes but is the most recognised theatre group that has worked with institutions on TfD projects on a large scale in Ghana since it was founded. They make use of performance aesthetics such as music, dance, drama, language, storytelling, dialogue, symbols, audience participation, drumming and improvisation. The performances range from, improvisation, short sketches, dance

drama, full drama productions of well-structured plays and TfD. All these various forms have been presented as and when the services of Abibigromma are expected and deemed appropriate. The various elements they have used in their performances are all key to successful implementation of TfD projects, which is the focus of this study and will be analysed in detail in the next chapter to assess their relevance in different forms of education.

3.5. THE THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT PROCESS: ACADEMIC

In the University of Ghana, School of Performing Arts, TfD is studied as a major academic programme both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. It is taken in the second semester of the third year with the course code THEA 348, where the school handbook states that

The course aims at exposing students to what development is in Africa and the elements and characteristics of Theatre. It challenges students to undertake community research projects and encourages community members to actively participate in the research process. The course equips students with project management community-based research skills and strategies for promoting community development. (The University of Ghana, 2015)

Students who are interested in TfD are expected to choose THEA 348 during the third year of the introductory lessons in the programme before they can choose it in their final year as their major specialisation to do research and write their long essay. During the final year, the student who qualifies to major or specialise in TfD will offer THEA 455 TfD 1 in the first semester and THEA 456 TfD 2 in the second semester. In this first semester of the final year, the course requirements state that

This advanced course in the theories and practice of theatre for development (TfD) covers project concept development, scripting, casting, rehearsals and production. Students will be required to select communities with identifiable issues mitigating development to which theatre could be used as an intervening tool. Preliminary visits and investigations will be put in a report for assessment (The University of Ghana, 2015).

Whereas in the second semester, the course requirements state that

In this follow-up course, students will design a TfD project to execute based on the preliminary study conducted. Key issues like ethics, customary law and practices will be discussed. Equipped with project management skills, community-based research skills and strategies for promoting community development, students will undertake individual projects conceived and mounted under faculty supervision (The University of Ghana, 2015).

Based on the university's TfD course descriptions, Abibigromma gives some of the students the opportunity to participate in some of their projects, do internships, or do their national service with them. In the process, some of the graduates serving under Abibigromma get the opportunity to be employed by the group if there is an available vacancy.

3.6. THE THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT PROCESS: COMMUNITY

In Chapter Two, it was explained that TfD is a process and this process is used to help outline every TfD related project for effective results. This process has been designed as a cycle called “The TfD Cycle”, which is always used as the model when undertaking community projects.

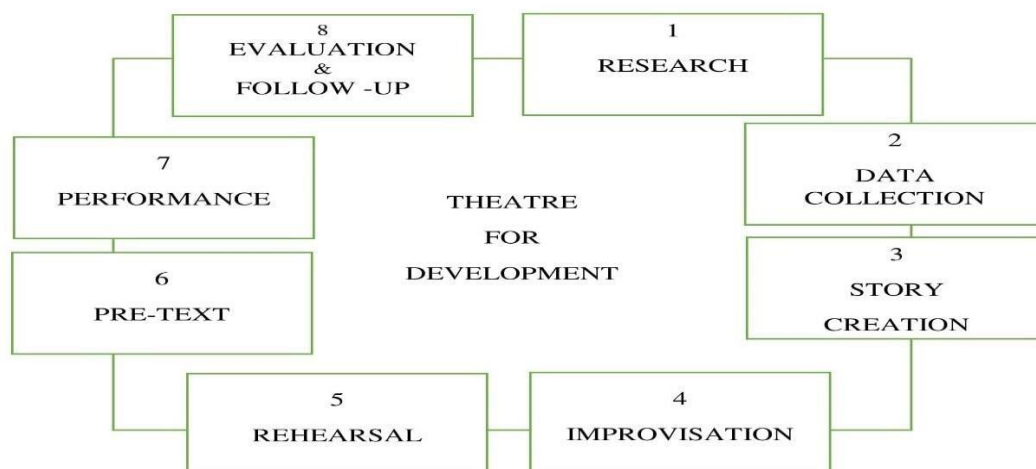


Figure 1. A diagram indicating the process involved in a TfD project.

The process starts with a research idea, an objective and a focus to help and allow for valuable suggestions, recommendations or methods for addressing an issue for change and development. In the case of a TfD process, such a role is seen as a participant observer, a co-ordinator, a collaborator, a catalyst, an instigator or investigator, an activist or advocate, a motivator or an initiator and an educator. It is relevant that any facilitator of a TfD project must make sure that the people under his or her coordination understand the need for change in a direction that will positively affect various developments in many areas. So in this research, Abibigromma is identified as the facilitator for the TfD presentation but RAFiD is the main facilitator for the entire programme. As the facilitator, it is important that when implementing a process a good relationship is established with the target group, audience or community. This is based on trustworthiness, understanding and reliability. This is necessary so that the facilitator is able to break down obstacles that might be encountered. It is only through such a process that the real problems can be diagnosed and sincerely discussed to get to the root cause of the problem and suggest solutions or attempt to solve it. The next stage is data collection.

The data could be the text, the kind of music, dance, drama or even costume Abibigromma may use, the sketches and improvisations they create and put together to engage in any kind of presentation for any purpose. The main data for the specific performance in 2016 was the information they acquired from RAFiD and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. The information Abibigromma gathered from these two organisations helped in getting to the next stage of the process, which was the story creation. The information was used to create concepts for the issues they were supposed to address in the drama presentation for the communities they were going to help in terms of education and awareness.

This takes the process to its next stage, called improvisation. The performance created was not, by definition, based on any existing text or storyline, even though in improvising, the group must have used some theatrical conventions. Working in this way helps Abibigromma, as the facilitator, understand the project, the data collected, and the story's aims and objectives. Improvisation fundamentally creates room for freestyle performance that helps the target group to be a part of the performance. The next stage is a rehearsal. By this stage, the group will have managed to come up with an appropriate storyline for the project. In this project, Abibigromma employed a non-participant observer approach, and this was to allow the target audience to be able to come out clearly, pour out their sentiments, while indirectly the audience entertained themselves in the process. Through this process, the audience or target group are able to express themselves and bring out information they might or would not have brought out if they were interviewed. Through the rehearsal, Abibigromma is able to come to terms with the overall objectives of the work and design a model play that fits the project. Through the rehearsals, they are able to polish up the model play and also adapt and modify it to suit every community they will present it to.

The next stage is the pre-text, this is when Abibigromma had to present the performance to RAFiD and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning to assess the performance and make suggestions to add and subtract should there be a need to make certain changes. The final stage is the evaluation and the follow-up. The evaluation section is when the resource personnel from the financial institution in the community is given the platform to interact with the community members about the information they have been given or made aware of through the presentation. It is also the question and answer time for suggestions and possible strategies for the objectives addressed in the presentation, which is when the problem presented in the TfD performance is thoroughly discussed.

3.7. RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL FINANCE PROGRAMME (RAFiP)

Abibigromma collaborated with RAFiP for a period of six months from January to June 2016 at the implementation stage through TfD. The theatre group was engaged in all ten regions of Ghana to present theatre performances to educate communities about the objectives of RAFiP. The performance was promoting a financial literacy campaign, educating small and middle scale communities about how to manage their finances. This was part of the implementation modules suggested by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. This programme was

Implemented by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, RAFiP works to provide poor rural people and smallholder farmers with improved access to financial services, technical assistance and risk management instruments. By connecting farmers with rural finance institutions, the programme seeks to support and improve sustainable livelihoods for the most vulnerable segments of the rural population, particularly women and young people. As key RAFiP partners, Ghana's rural microfinance institutions (MFIs) have demonstrated an ability to enhance their own performance and a willingness to support an inclusive rural finance environment. RAFiP promotes innovation in the microfinance sector, because it is vital that financial approaches, products and services be designed to address the specific needs of poor rural people. RAFiP also supports Ghana's MFIs and the wider rural financial system by enhancing institutional performance, public outreach and client orientation. The programme thus strengthens agricultural value chains and provides smallholder farmers with an opportunity to maximise the productive potential of their lands (IFAD, 2017).

3.7.1. THE PERFORMANCE

Abibigromma presented dramatic performances in all the ten regions of Ghana, mostly to farmers and fishermen. The purpose was to educate them and create awareness of good and profitable methods of saving money to boost their financial status and livelihood, most importantly in their various businesses. This was also to help the farmers and fishermen to cultivate the concept of saving money at the banks or legally recognised financial institutions. Through the Rural and

Agricultural Programme (RAFiP) and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, it is known that the majority of these fish and food farmers face serious financial challenges in their various attempts to sustain their businesses to enhance their living conditions. This is because the fishermen need loans to buy equipment such as outboard motors, fishing nets, mix oil and boats. The farmers also need agro inputs, herbicides, pesticides, insecticides, fertilisers and hiring of tracks and huge equipment but they are not able to afford bank loans, due to the fact that they normally cannot meet the loan requirements or provide collateral.

Field surveys conducted by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning indicated that most of the farmers and fishermen do not have any financial saving system. Some save their money in boxes and sack in their rooms. This money can easily be lost when there are fires or floods in their communities. They may also lose it during a robbery, even if that is not common. There was also some fraudulent microfinance systems such as DKM (Delle Kundegni Martin) Diamond Micro-Finance⁴, R5 Savings and Loans⁵ and Pyram⁶ operating in the communities, who enticed the fishermen and farmers with large and outrageous interest rates and saving terms and conditions but who later bolted with the saving of the farmers and fishermen.

⁴ This is a micro finance company which is believed to have operated under licence from the Bank of Ghana since October 2014. The company's operational headquarters are in Techiman, in the Brong Ahafo region. Their services include Investment and Fixed Deposit Car and/or Building Loan Plan for all, Financial Loan Plan for all and Savings and Withdrawal Banking. In 2015, reports began appearing that DKM had squandered about GHS 77 million in the deposits of its customers in risky business ventures with subsidiaries of the company.

⁵ Some few years after the Pyram Scheme, another ugly scheme raised its head and you might have thought Ghanaians would have learned their lesson but unfortunately they didn't. Many joined the bank because of their high interest rates and, funnily enough, it turned out to be another scam and millions of cedis were lost in the operation.

⁶ In the 1990s, Pyram became a very popular financial institution when they promised to give huge interest on savings if you banked with them. This caused many Ghanaians to withdraw their money from their banks to save with Pyram. Some few people were smart enough to withdraw all their savings plus the interest they made with the investment company and just as it became big, things started falling apart. The bank closed down and was labelled illegal. That is when it dawned on people it was a scam, but by then it was too late.

There were cases when some of their clients died of shock and frustration after losing their life savings. As a result, the indigenous people are mostly abandoned to a cycle of poverty to find any means of starting their businesses all over again. Some might be lucky to get personal cash loans and working inputs from family and friends, while others may not, thus creating a tremendous financial burden for themselves, their families and their communities as a whole.

In all the communities chosen to represent the various regions in Ghana that Abibigromma went to as part of this Tfd programme, they had a standard performance as a model drama which was modified depending on the specific community they were performing for, so as to suit that community. For example, if the community is a fishing one, the message in the drama is modified to fit in, with the same going for a food farming community. Abibigromma worked together with financial resources person in each community, usually, the person could be the manager of the local rural or community bank. These bankers who served as financial resources persons were given the platform to have interaction with the audience or targeted community members made up of the farmers, and market men and women. Hence the performances took place in market centres because of the target group.

The interactions were based on the main objectives of the programme and gave the community members the opportunity to learn about the right and legal schemes and forms of saving that would help them not only sustain but boost their livelihoods. The communities were advised to check the identification of any finance personnel that approached them with any savings and loan schemes and seek certain information. This included the following:

- Certificate of operation of the said saving and loan scheme
- The Bank of Ghana Logo on the certificate
- Identify the financial personnel or executive personally at their designated offices

- Have their official contact numbers
- The interest rate offered by the said financial scheme should not be more than what has been endorsed by the Bank of Ghana.

In the presentations, the mode of communication was solely the local language of the specific community. This is because in TfD performances the most important objective is that the information needs to be specifically presented in the language that the target group understands best, to avoid any possible confusion. As can be seen in the photos, however, there was information in English on the boards in the background, on the banners and in the programmes because there are always some community members who have learnt the language. Due to the TfD objective, however, the indigenous language is always the principal mode of communication and presentation. After the drama presentation, a financial resource person from the bank interacted with the community members in a question and answer session, where suggestions were also given. Follow-ups were to be conducted by RAFiD since they were the main facilitators of the project.



Figure 2. The performance began with a call from the artists to the community to come around to listen, watch and learn about ways they can manage their finances to help enhance their businesses and financial flow



Figure 3. The artists engaged in a dance performance as a prelude to the main programme. This is done in TfD programmes so that the programme facilitators prepare and wait for their audience to settle in before the awareness performance is presented.



Figure 4. In this photograph, we see the performers in a market area, presenting their message, which is also part of the Tfd



Figure 5. In this photograph, there are two men, a farmer and a fisherman, having a conversation about financial awareness.



Figure 6. The community has met and discussed the financial awareness knowledge they have acquired. They are now discussing a solution that will help them in their fishing and farming businesses.



Figure 7. The community members have finally embraced the new awareness and recommended financial education. The performance ends here with a dance.

TfD performance aesthetics put the relevance of TfD in context as regards Ghanaian Education. Itemised in the next chapter, these features will be analysed and discussed to assess their contribution to the education process. The works of Abibigromma have therefore been able to penetrate the silence and shadows, creating a bridge between theory and practice, which has resulted in diverse forms of development through theatre education both in educational institutions and the Ghanaian community at large.

At the end of the TfD presentation and discussions, it was observed that the farmers and traders had had very little previous knowledge about their financial issues, planning and transactions. They had now learned new ways of thinking of how and where to save their income and invest their money; the necessary and legal procedures they had to consider; and the new opportunities they could assess when planning their financial lives with the right financial institutions. They had the opportunity to ask for clarification about banking services and the kinds of products they can assess to enhance the growth of their farming and fishing businesses. The location of the performances positively affected the people because they felt they belonged and were part of the education process. They were motivated because the performance drastically transformed them psychologically, as they had the opportunity to both share their experiences and listen to others. It was then a process of change for most of the community members as regards their financial issues. They were more excited to learn from the financial resource person that they could form groups of five or ten to take a loan from the banks to invest in their business, and this motivated them to decide to save their money in banks rather than keep it at home and risk losing it to fire, flood or robbery. To this effect, a community member suggested that RAFiP set up a group that could occasionally visit and enlighten them, as well as monitor their businesses to help them grow. In

the end, there were possible signs of relief, with lessons being learned and some doubts explained. The event gave a different and valuable worldview to the people in the communities who observed, witnessed and participated in the programme.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter discusses the pedagogical content of the performance aesthetics employed in Theatre for Development and their use, with reference to Abibigromma's projects. It will identify the performance aesthetics the company proposes as educational strategies or pedagogical elements for education in academic institutions that bring development.

4.1. EDUCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC PROJECTS

Over the years, Abibigromma has undertaken various educational and academic projects with students from the School of Performing Arts and some other educational institutions across the country. In the School of Performing Arts, some of the students have had the opportunity to participate in some of Abibigromma's activities. There have been internship opportunities in theatre management, acting, stagecraft and design, property handling, costume and makeup, prompting, sound and lighting, dance, music, choreography, painting, box office management, accounting, advertising and publicity, public relations and communications, marketing, playwriting and directing. These have been educational platforms for many students, giving them greater opportunities in terms of exploration, creativity, collaboration and discovery. This has helped the students to learn a lot beyond the standard and somewhat restricted structure of the educational system that was introduced during colonial times.

4.2. PROFESSIONAL AND COMMERCIAL PROJECTS

Abibigromma has collaborated with many institutions on professional projects and also provided lots of commercial services for a lot of institutions and organisations. These have been both national and international. The projects have ranged from simple dramatic sketches, dance performances, dance dramas, improvisations, full structured conventional stage dramas and TfDs.

4.3. PERFORMANCE FEATURES

From a general perspective, every theatre performance has three forms of features: the normative, the descriptive and the production (Pavis, 1999). The normative form of features evaluates the script. The descriptive form of features puts the play into different categories, as well as the kind of reception and the reaction the performance receives from its audience. The production form of features takes into consideration the text in the script that is being used for the performance. It focuses on the author's intentions through the performance and the reaction of the audience to the performance. Aesthetics in the drama are not complex when compared to those of music. This is because drama is an art that can be seen, but, in general, music is listened to while the musical story is imagined in the mind's eye of the listener. Therefore an audience's response or reaction to music is linked to vision. This is how Dewitt H. Parker (Parker, 2017) explains that music is a free, personal mode of expression for both the artist making the music and the listener or the audience watching the music performed. In explaining musical features, he says it is both a personal and social permanent expression. And that music, therefore, explores our reactions to beauty such emotions as happiness, anguish, depression and anger. This is the reason why in TfD, even though

most of the performances begin with music and dance, the main message is presented in a dramatic form, with dialogue so that the audience will not just be analysing the issues addressed intangibly.

4.3.1. LANGUAGE

The British linguist, S. Pit Corder in his explanation of how language works says that

The first way we can approach language is as a phenomenon of the individual person. It is concerned with describing and explaining language as a matter of human behaviour. People speak and write; they also evidently read and understand what they hear. They are not born doing so; they have to acquire these skills. Not everybody seems to develop them to the same degree. People may suffer accidents or disorders which impair their performance. Language is thus seen as a part of human psychology, a particular sort of behaviour, the behaviour which has as its principle function that of communication (Corder, 1985).

In performance, language is one of the most important elements. This is because almost everything that is put together to produce a complete performance has its own language that presents a kind of message or the message the performance is addressing. Through the diction and dialogue, both the participant and the audience are able to comprehend the context of the dramatic or dance piece. The language helps the audience to establish a sense of belonging and familiarity with the performance. It is paramount that the language that is common to both the performer and the audience is used so as to establish a cordial, collaborative and communicative relationship between the performers and the audience.

Language can be analysed and described under several criteria, coming to the most different results. It is this plurality of aspects in studying the same object that makes language a perpetual phenomenon. Language is an actor that both shapes, and is shaped by the social community in which it plays a significant role (Sirbu, 2015).

In education, language is the fundamental means of communication between the teacher and the student. It produces continuity of interaction whether it is verbal or non-verbal. Through language,

one gains self-awareness and is able to communicate ideas and emotions that are essential for the development of human society as a whole.

4.3.2. MUSIC AND DANCE

In the African socio-cultural setting, it is very difficult to separate music and dance. This is because they are practised hand in hand. Music and dance are known to be a unique and spectacular aspect of African daily life. These performance features play a very important role in the life cycle of every society from birth to death. They are, therefore, used as a tool for both formal and informal educational elements when it comes to the transfer of knowledge. Music and dance also serve a language with specific interpretation through the different tones in the musical structure, as well as the various movements and gestures in the dance performance. The audience watch, listen and interpret them comprehensively to learn the information being carried across. Abibigromma has used these performance features extensively in almost all their activities. Through music and dance, the participants and the audience are able to reflect on the setting of the activities, especially when used as an interlude or some form of foundation performance or prelude to the main performance. It can be used as a “call to order”, which helps to focus the audience on some impending events yet to be unfolded in the performance. Sometimes it is used as an appreciation gesture from the performers to the audience. Dance movements or gestures can also tell the audience the plot. Through dance, people are able to display their skill, thus building confidence and raising their self-esteem, as well as gain the admiration of the audience. In performance, when the performer is admired by the audience, it is natural that their sense of self-importance and belonging increases. This feeling is transferred to both the performers and the audience and, in the case of a TfD, the entire community. In an educational setting, this applies to both the teacher and

the students. Dance helps in recreation and revitalization. The significance of the dance lies in the gestures interpreted as symbolic, together with the meaning(s) and message(s) they convey to the audience. This is because these gestures can be used to express specific or certain emotions, establish some kind of cordial relationship or harmonise a strained relationship, for example, between teachers and students. The features of music and dance in performance, as used by TfD practitioners are relevant in education because “Practising music [and dance] reinforces teamwork, communication skills, self-discipline, and creativity” (Kalivretenos, 2015).

4.3.3. STORYTELLING

Storytelling is one of the elements performing artists use for TfD projects. Storytelling is mostly understood to be a form of cultural education. Through this form, people learn to speak fluently, and also develop their indigenous language. Another school of thought explains storytelling as “a narrative account of a real or imagined event or events” (Larkin, 1997). Storytelling has a specific structure in its narration, which involves a specific style. This is because storytelling has sets of characters that create a sense of completeness and, through the sharing of experiences, the stories are used to pass on accumulated knowledge, wisdom, beliefs and values. As a result of this, it is used in TfD for educational purposes. Through storytelling, there is a pedagogical and didactic function that results in national development in education. The art of storytelling in education helps to explain how things are, why they are how they are, our role as individuals undergoing a certain kind of education at a certain time or period in our lives and the purpose of this education. As a result, through the use of storytelling in education, the stories become the building blocks of knowledge and one of the foundations of memory and learning. The use of storytelling in education helps connect us with our humanity and link us to the knowledge of the past and the present, as

well as the future we are yet to discover by teaching us to anticipate the possible consequences of our actions (Larkin, 1997).

As is expected in education, the “telling” aspect of storytelling is the live, person-to-person oral and physical presentation of a story to an audience. This “telling” involves direct contact between the teller and the listener. It, therefore, demands the direct presentation of the story by the teller. Like the teacher who delivers or imparts knowledge to the student, the teller’s role is to prepare and present the necessary language, vocalisation and physicality to effectively and efficiently communicate the tale.

The listener, who in this case is the student, has the role of actively creating the vivid, multisensory image, action, characters and events. Therefore, the reality of the story in their mind is based on the performance by the teller, and on their own past experiences, beliefs and understanding. This is relevant in TfD because those who are being addressed receive the new information and it goes through this same process before being captured, understood and accepted, causing change and development. The result of this is that the completed story happens in the mind of the listener, unique to everyone, and personal for each individual (Larkin, 1997). It is thus highly arguable that in TfD, using storytelling is a great contributing factor to life enhancement and development. This is because it operates diversely on us, in areas such as entertainment, edification, ethical values, preservation of culture, instruction, commemoration and, therefore, cannot be separated from our lives. It functions very well in moral education as an invented structure for conserving communicational order. It is also a great tool for enhancing communication, performance and learning, as well as management for change. This can be seen in almost all the activities Abibigromma is involved in. Through storytelling, we acquire knowledge and this helps us resist the temptation of setting the records straight, as the Banking Theory by Paulo Freire explains. As

it unfolds, the story helps one to learn to relish the text, seek to establish the narrative needs and, through that process, gain the psychological needs that are sometimes distorted, ambiguous and inaccurate. So, as the Tfd approach is identified as a process, we engage through storytelling, with its emotionally displayed interests, empathy and pleasure of that process, to bring about change and development through its use as an educational element. Storytelling is skilful and authentic and used downwards, upwards and sideways in a variety of hierarchical settings to achieve purposes such as sparking action, communicating who you are, transmitting a trademark, sharing knowledge, getting collaboration, transmitting values and leading people: all of which have been identified in the works of Abibigromma over the years. In general, the process of using storytelling helps to capture attention and excite the imagination, allowing the audience or student to be diverse, assume a moral position and finally pass judgement. It has therefore increasingly become a popular method of enquiry because it gives the student, the teacher, the educator, the researcher and the indigenous person a sense of tacit knowledge.

4.3.4. SYMBOLS

Symbols, being multifunctional and versatile, are used in performance to connote and represent specific things, as well as give specific interpretations to the performance and relate a specific message to the audience. There are also symbolic gestures used to interact or interpret a certain action or actions, to convey a message for which language may not be necessary at a given point in time. Some people use paint, the skins or horns of animals (to mention a few) to create the setting of the drama presentation. For example, in Abibigromma presentations, we see from the pictures that some of the performers are holding woven baskets used to carry foodstuffs from the farms to the market or their homes. Others are also holding machetes and hoes. These are

symbolically representing the characters as farmers. In the case of the fishermen, they had some pans, fishing nets and lines. Some presentations use masks to symbolise various issues. The mask has a conventional meaning, so the interpretation depends on the community the performance is presented to. This is because a mask used by a certain community is connected to their unique ethnic culture. Sometimes the mask used by the performers might also have a religious interpretation if, for example, the dramatic element is based on a religious developmental issue.

4.3.5. DIALOGUE

Dialogue is a verbal interchange of ideas and thoughts, designed to suit various contexts in a way that it must be heard and understood by the audience. The most important element in a performance is dialogue, be it verbal or non-verbal. Dialogue sets the pace of the performance. It unveils the characters to the audience, who are the target of the performance, and also gives the entire setting a kind of tone. It is in the dialogue that the changes within the unfolding story are unearthed so that the audience can make comparisons between the issues addressed from the beginning to the end. It is in the dialogue that we experience the continuity of the story. For any performance in Tfd to be successful in communicating its message and creating the needed awareness, the “dialogue must fit in with the story of the play smoothly, must suit a character's personality, must be capable of being uttered effortlessly, and must be understood easily” (Cagil, 2008).

4.3.6. DRAMA

The use of drama brings about comparative evidence in the presentation for the audience to be able to have many scenarios to assess critically. It also provides a kind of interpretation for the audience, which helps them to draw in particular knowledge. The idea of the enactment of a representation

of specific issues helps the audience learn or come to terms with the awareness and advocacy of messages through the imitation of the performers or the events that unfold in the storyline. The dramatic dialogue in itself is used to communicate messages to the audience through the events in the story.

4.3.7. IMPROVISATION

The purpose of improvisation is to take existing materials and combine them to produce something new and unique for a specific purpose. In the case of TfD, it is usually bits of information about the problem or situation, and thus the data that is collected from the initial stage. In education, the teachers and students use tools and methods to make teaching and learning more flexible. For example, a teacher presents a new concept which might be in line with an old concept to fit into the new context. The student is assigned to fit the new concept into an area of study. During class, the teacher and the student test these concepts through examples, problem-solving and discussions. After class, students could be required to use the concepts and create new ones through home assignments. It is clear that improvisation brings about role-playing. This is because “the premise of role-play is to have persons such as students become active characters in a given situation. Why not have some students take the part of a teacher while others act as students” (Maheux & Lajoie, 2010). Teaching in its general sense has a lot to do with improvisation, as life is a constant improvisation. There is a kind of listening that is required on the part of the teacher as well because it will affect the kind and the intensity of the improvisation. So the act of teaching remains an opening to the unpredictable. It allows students to question, explain, and make enquiries based on their personal reasoning and observation. It helps them explore and try out new ideas. This, in turn, brings about new ways of creating their own new procedures. Throughout this process, what takes

place is summed up as improvisation: “Improvisation teaches students that they have the power to create. Drama can be a rehearsal for life, where students learn from successes and mistakes. Topics for improvisation can relate directly to class work or stimulate discussion of new topics. [There are] three steps for teaching improvisation (verbalization, visualisation, and actualization)” (Martin, 1994).

4.3.8. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The audience plays a crucial and critical role in every performance. They are the focus of the performance. They are the target group. They are the reason the performance exists. They are the receivers enabling the performance to be assessed. This is because it is from their perspective that monitoring and evaluation can be undertaken. An audience observes and responds to a performance through their facial expressions, exclamations and mood swings during the unfolding events. In a musical performance of “call and response”, the audience become actively involved in the performance as participant observers and contribute to the total performance output. In this case, the audience becomes what is termed “part owners” or “recognised owners” of the performance. Even though they are an audience, their performance is for and with the performers.

4.3.9. DRUMMING

Drums and drumming are another important performance features used in TfD. The rhythm and sound produced during a drumming period is a form of language to both the performers and the audience, which is used to interpret certain non-verbal information to the audience. It can be a movement signal or timing for the performers or a cue. It can also be used as an interlude notification for the audience. The sound is produced together with others such as stomping of feet,

clapping of hands, singing and other performance features that produce a harmonious presentation in the end to the satisfaction of both the performers and the audience.

Sometimes the drum presents a coded language that delivers a specific message. In other performances, it is used for the direct representation of the spoken language itself, through the tones, rhythm and beat the player produces. In drumming, the kind of tones, rhythms and patterns depend on the music or spoken work that is accompanying it, as well as the kind of occasion. All such factors depict the type of communication the drum presents to its listeners.

Drums are used to represent simple messages conveyed from the performance to the listener or audience. Drum language is also used to communicate birth, marriage, death, community assemblies, and group hunting expeditions. Besides these, drums can be used for name interpretations and signalling appellations: to praise the names of certain leaders during public occasions. For example, when there is the presence of a traditional leader as part of the audience in the community where the TfD project takes place, the drum is used to praise and signal his arrival.

4.4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

In the various works undertaken by Abibigromma, it can be observed that artistic, creative and improvisational elements are employed in the process of producing a theatrical piece for the TfD projects. There is the introduction of realistic and non-realistic forms, theatre workshops, discussions and interrogations of any material that is the source of a production or project. It is believed that during performances, the audience does not only become actors but are also touched by the cause of the performance: they fall into the action, clap, laugh and engage actively in what goes on.

This means the audience understand the actions and events that unfold before them and get involved. When this is used in education, the students get the opportunity to be involved in the teaching and learning process rather than just being on the receiving end. In most of the performances by Abibigromma, be it dance, drama, a sketch, an ushering in performance, an improvisation or a community advocacy or awareness project, all of these activities have an element of education for development through the theme or the central idea or message they convey.

All Abibigromma performances are of highly educative significance, as their concepts and activities are widely acknowledged and accepted for both educational, entertainment and developmental purposes. When it comes to the creative process, it is known that when they perform a full drama presentation at the Efua Sutherland Drama Studio, the National Theatre or some other venue, the text of the original play is the main source of material for the work. But sometimes the director of the play may manipulate the script a bit to fit the expectations of the audience in relation to the activity and the kind of audience they are presenting it to.

During other programmes where Abibigromma is expected to present a sketch, the creative process involves artistic improvisation, the use of realistic and non-realistic elements, ideas, identification and concept interrogation to develop a new dramatic piece based on the subject matter or theme for the occasion or an adaptation of another text to suit what Abibigromma is expected to present. This cuts across Abibigromma's three working areas: music, dance and drama. The structures of the dramas and sketches are mostly created around socio-cultural and political realities identifying particular issues. The company's activities, therefore, provide a focus for research, creativity, experimentation, teaching and learning for both formal and informal educational platforms. The group's message is always clear because the language best understood by their audience is always

used in performance. The situations presented connect with their audience, hence they are able to identify with them and realise that the activities trigger actions they themselves can take into real life. Apart from the dramas Abibigromma stages for public viewing or commercial purposes where the audience, be it students or non-students buy tickets to watch, their programmes create an atmosphere where everyone who attends the performance is able to participate without feeling inferior. In relation to the sketches they present on some occasions, Abibigromma is highly creative in developing themes, characters, subject matter, role playing, and staging so as to fit the message the group has been asked to present to its audience.

In general, judging from the works of Abibigromma, it is evident that TfD is relevant in education. Considering all the performance aesthetics analysed, which are the core of Abibigromma's activities, the company exhibits the dynamics of teaching and learning and the importance of using these aesthetics in education. Real experience is thus claimed by the student who is being educated. This is because it opens up an opportunity for engagement and participating, observing, belonging, personal assessment, monitoring and evaluation of the knowledge that is being imparted to the student. To some extent, it is therefore right to say that the use of TfD performance aesthetics, such as language, music and dance, storytelling techniques, the use of symbols, the audience (student) participation, and drumming are all highly significant aspects that must be used in the educational system in Ghana.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1. SUMMARY

The study assessed the relevance of Theatre for Development in Ghanaian education by examining one of the country's major theatre companies, Abibigromma, the Resident Theatre Group of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana that is well known for its many years of engaging in performance activities including Theatre for Development projects for diverse educational purposes and entertainment. The study was made up of five chapters. Chapter One served as an introduction and overview of the entire research work. It introduced the background of the study, objectives, problems, research questions, and methods. It also outlined the significance of the study. Chapter Two provided a detailed account of the Ghanaian formal educational structure and the Theatre for Development concepts that are relevant for educational purposes were reviewed. Theatre for Development theories that support this research from a global perspective focusing on the Ghanaian context were also reviewed. Chapter Three discussed Abibigromma, the background and works from its origin to date, in the context of Theatre for Development. Chapter Four discussed the pedagogical content of the use of Theatre for Development in Ghana, with reference to Abibigromma's projects. It also analysed and interpreted the various performance features used by Abibigromma in their performance activities that are also identified in Theatre for Development projects. Chapter Five, which is this final chapter, addresses the study's findings, limitations, recommendations and conclusion.

5.2. FINDINGS

TfD plays a highly significant role in Ghanaian education and it is not easy to convince people of the universality of its application beyond rural communities or even Ghana's borders. This is because many people think it is an indigenous educational approach and hence can only be used in indigenous communities. Most of the issues addressed in the various communities where Abibigromma presented the TfD projects, however, can be found in any society. They emanate from common human errors irrespective of the actions of the people, lack of knowledge about certain life and development ideas, as well as poor decision-making and perceptions. There was also evidence of duty shedding and a sense of irresponsibility on the part of some officers in the communities who were to informally educate the fish and crop farmers about financial plans and business development. With specific reference from the RAFiP TfD project, it was revealed that the industries that supply the farmers with inputs and equipment do not have any means of educating their customers (the farmers) about good usage and maintenance practices for a longer lifespan of the products. This is because they do not have the expertise to educate them from a TfD perspective. The financial institutions also do not make their packages easily accessible to the farmers, because the majority are not able to meet the collateral requirement. It was also discovered that there is difficulty in allocating funds for TfD projects independently, unless the project is directly beneficial, such as in the RAFiP programme in this research. It is one of the few reasons why Abibigromma cannot engage in TfD projects on its own in the school or within the Ghanaian community, even though there are very critical issues across the country that need to be addressed through TfD.

5.3. LIMITATIONS

The research was not able to collect a significant amount of data which would have been relevant for this study. This was, firstly, due to time constraints and, more importantly, the lack of proper and well-structured record keeping, documentation and archiving of the projects that Abibigromma undertakes. This is because while I was gathering the data, I realised that the company did not have an archiving system where students and researchers could easily access data, hence when someone needs information about Abibigromma it takes much longer than expected to get it. My study did not to assess and discuss the entire works of Abibigromma but, rather, a TfD performance, which was, unfortunately, the only one done by the company within the period of my research. Due to the scope of the projects, the respondents, audience and target group of Abibigromma's TfD project assessed in this research were not available to be interviewed or review the project being researched. Since Abibigromma does not own the RAFiP project to undertake the TfD implementation aspect of the project continuously, it was very difficult for the workers or performers from Abibigromma to give detail information about it. Even though Abibigromma was engaged to do the TfD presentation, the managerial structure does not involve the workers and performers in contractual negotiations. Thirdly, Abibigromma does not seem to have a specific calendar for operations in line with the academic calendar of the School of Performing Arts. Hence they perform as and when they are engaged by the school or by a private organisation. The university has a managerial system, where a manager's position lasts for a period of two years with a possible extension of only one year. Hence it is very difficult for the leadership to plan long term projects for Abibigromma, as there is no guarantee that after his or her term is over, the new leadership will continue with the project or not.

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the research that has been conducted on the data collection, observation, assessment and analysis, there are some recommendations that need to be addressed. The first is that the educational system in Ghana needs to review the curriculum and consider including Tfd performance aesthetics in the teaching and learning approaches, strategies, modules and methodologies to bring about the diversity of acquiring and imparting knowledge. Secondly, it would be highly beneficial if the University of Ghana could include Abibigromma in the School of Performing Arts' academic calendar. In this case, some of the academic projects, such as those undertaken by the students studying Tfd could be bridged to the community through a collaborative project implementation between the students and Abibigromma. Thirdly, it would be appropriate if Abibigromma had a well outlined academic project calendar fitting into the School of Performing Arts' academic calendar. Fourthly, due to the extensive work that Abibigromma undertakes every year. I recommend that Abibigromma set up a digital archiving system, where they can keep records of all their projects, so that students and researchers who need to access them as data for their work can easily do so. Finally, I suggest that Abibigromma needs to develop a policy and procedure manual which will give the company a structured operational process. This manual could easily be accessed by researchers, visitors and students, so that the world at large could learn about the group's projects.

Generally, the relevance of Tfd in education needs to be addressed in diverse ways and also aimed at regularly educating society about it. Tfd should not be restricted to rural communities only but should also be a key educational methodology in cities, within all forms of institutions and organisations for complete development and a sustainable result. It would be a great step forward if the Ministry of Education could go further to place Tfd projects in the educational curriculum

to serve as a means of introducing its functions and relevance into the lives of the students as they advance in academia. It would also open diverse ways of learning and help students enhance their study capacity in diverse approaches.

Effective collaboration between the government, academic institutions and other organisations as key partners can ensure the relevance of TfD in all forms of education, be it formal or informal. Abibigromma can work out a formal approach to the leadership of the School of Performing Arts and collaborate with private institutions and non-governmental organisations to create a platform of continuous sensitization and knowledge acquisition skill through TfD projects. TfD can be adopted by the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) in their mass education of the general public on government policies, because it could serve as an easy communication and developmental approach to improving the living standards and knowledge base of the people. In our educational institutions, applying TfD approaches in teaching and learning in various schools at the various levels is a broad means of reaching out to the students in their diverse knowledge acquisition levels and perspectives. The Ghana Education Service, therefore, needs to be encouraged to support such an initiative by inculcating TfD in the syllabus.

5.5. CONCLUSION

The use of Theatre for Development in education encourages creativity. It has helped the academic institutions that first saw themselves as being outside the mainstream of the national theatrical life to now find themselves within the economic, cultural and social circumstances. In the formal educational institutions, using Theatre for Development would develop the student's creative and imaginative powers. The study has implications for the academic world, communities,

stakeholders, agencies, religious groups and the government. The application of this research goes beyond just TfD, and could also be adopted by NGOs, peacemakers during conflict resolutions, management teams, social workers and the different institutions under government. Finally, the relevance of TfD in education in Ghana has undoubtedly been questioned because it does not work on a national scale but just in smaller communities. Yet all negative perceptions about its relevance can be defended in various ways, with this research being one of the few pieces of evidence. A collaborative effort involving TfD facilitators, the Ministry of Education through the Ghana Education Service, the National Commission on Civic Education, NGOs and the media can create the necessary awareness and transform both the formal and informal education system in Ghana.

RESUMO ALARGADO

Este estudo aborda a importância do Teatro para o Desenvolvimento (TfD) na educação do Gana. Analisa a emergência da educação formal antes da independência do país e o estabelecimento de diferentes estruturas e instituições educativas que valorizaram a educação até hoje. Essa educação iniciou-se com as *mission schools*, *university colleges*, universidades, escolas superiores de educação, politécnicos, escolas primárias, *junior secondary schools* (agora chamadas *junior high schools*) e *senior high schools* que levam ao certificado denominado West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

As estruturas educativas do Gana tiveram diversas modificações de currículo desde o início da educação colonial na Costa do Ouro, de 1821 até à independência em 1957, quando Nkrumah J.B Danquah iniciou muitas reformas educacionais, através do período de governos militares e até ao governo democrático de J.J. Rawlings e até hoje, A questão é que as agências governamentais, não-governamentais e o setor privado têm sempre limitações na identificação dos diversos meios de transferência de informações para as massas e isso afeta o desenvolvimento social sustentável. Em consequência, o TfD foi introduzido como um módulo relevante no fornecimento de exercícios efetivos e participativos criando um maior impacto do conhecimento e uma plataforma de aquisição de conhecimentos para alcançar melhores condições de vida. O TfD é uma perspectiva teatral literária iniciada no início da década de 1960. Tem como objetivo educar a sociedade através da sensibilização, conscientização e da comunicação de mensagens de desenvolvimento para comunidades alvo. É visto como processo e como produto de implementação. São analisadas contribuições académicas sobre TfD para apoiar os objetivos da investigação, referindo trabalhos semelhantes de sucesso em alguns países africanos como Nigéria, Zimbabwe, Quênia, Tanzânia e África do Sul. O TfD é apresentado e discutido como um dos módulos relevantes para a educação

no Gana, devido à introdução de diversas políticas que encorajam a valorização do ensino e da aprendizagem e uma forma holística de aquisição de conhecimento no setor formal e informal do país. Isto opõe-se àquilo a que Paulo Freire chamou o “Modelo Bancário da Educação”, em que era unicamente permitido aos alunos adquirir conhecimentos, enchendo e guardando-os em depósitos de informação. Através disto, o corrente sistema educacional do Gana é avaliado e os conteúdos educacionais de Tfd examinados, para avaliar o Tfd como módulos educacional e analisar as obras da Abibigromma que produziram benefícios educacionais. Neste contexto, este estudo debruça-se sobre Abibigromma, a companhia de teatro residente da School of Performing Arts da Universidade do Gana analisando os interessantes projetos de Tfd que têm levado a cabo pelo país desde a sua fundação.

A história desta companhia, o seu contexto e as contribuições para o ensino e para a comunidade do Gana são alguns dos temas abordados, seguindo-se a análise do projeto mais recente de Tfd da companhia. A estética da performance e os elementos que poderiam ser introduzidos nas instituição de educação formal para valorizar o impacto e aquisição do conhecimento no sistema educacional do Gana foram abordados em mais pormenor.

Este estudo é composto por cinco capítulos. O Capítulo Um é uma introdução a toda a investigação, dando uma perspetiva geral sobre o tema. Introduz o contexto do estudo, objetivos, problemas, questões da investigação e métodos, assim como esboça o significado do estudo. O Capítulo Dois fornece uma revisão da literatura sobre a educação no Gana, o “modelo bancário de educação” definido por Paulo Freire, o Teatro para o Desenvolvimento (Tfd), o Tfd como processo, o Tfd como produto e o Tfd na educação no Gana. O capítulo seguinte aborda a Abibigromma, a companhia residente da School of Performing Arts na University of Ghana. Desenha o contexto histórico, os programas académicos ou institucionais que a companhia empreende, os programas

comunitários em que se envolveu e apresenta um esboço de todos os programas que a companhia apresentou desde 2016. São avaliados os programas académicos e comunitários da Abibigromma que usam processos de Tfd. Um programa específico realizado dentro do período desta pesquisa e que foi analisado é o Rural and Agricultural Finance Programme (RAFiP), organizado pelo Ministério das Finanças e Planeamento Económico como um projeto financiado pelo Governo do Gana e pelo Banco Mundial. O projeto foi iniciado pelo ministério para ajudar a melhorar os serviços financeiros disponíveis para os agricultores mais pobres e pequenos agricultores, para conhecerem e poderem aceder aos serviços financeiros, à assistência técnica e aos instrumentos de gestão de risco de que necessitam para seu trabalho. Como resultado, algumas instituições de microfinanças abraçaram a ideia de apoiar o projeto, dando a esses agricultores locais conscientização e sessões educacionais sobre as abordagens financeiras mais adequadas e os produtos e serviços que atendem às suas necessidades económicas. As informações educacionais centraram-se na certificação das operações do plano de poupança e empréstimo acima referido, identificação do logotipo do Banco de Gana no certificado, identificação do pessoal financeiro ou executivo e dos seus escritórios, os seus números oficiais de contacto e informações sobre taxas de juros do plano de poupança, que não deve ser superior ao aprovado pelo Banco do Gana.

A companhia Abibigromma foi contratada para envolver algumas comunidades num projeto de Tfd nas dez regiões do Gana e ao longo de um período de seis meses, de janeiro a junho de 2016. Os espetáculos foram documentados e analisados. Nessa análise e interpretação, feita no capítulo quatro, o trabalho desta companhia de teatro é categorizado em dois grupos principais: os projetos académicos e educacionais, e os projetos profissionais e comunitários. O projeto adotou uma metodologia de pesquisa qualitativa para poder explorar, descrever e explicar os objetivos. Isso deveu-se ao facto de os pensamentos, sentimentos e comportamento dos grupos-alvo serem muito

relevantes para alcançar o resultado esperado e apreender o contexto social e situacional dos fenômenos sob investigação. Também permitiu revelar o entendimento e percepção dos próprios participantes. Com referência ao programa RAFiD, os elementos do espetáculo usados pela Abibigromma nas apresentações TfD em vários programas comunitários de educação e consciencialização são identificados e analisados. Incluem linguagem, música e dança, contar histórias, símbolos, diálogo, drama, improvisação, participação do público e precursão. Segue-se uma análise e interpretação extensiva do significado cultural de cada elemento em relação ao TfD e sua compreensão a partir da perspectiva do grupo-alvo através do espetáculo apresentado. Esta estética da performance auxilia a descrição e avaliação do espetáculo, assim como a compreensão e aceitação da mensagem pelo público ou grupo-alvo. Também abre as portas ao empenhamento, observação, sentido de pertença ao público ou grupo-alvo, avaliação pessoal, acompanhamento e avaliação individual da mensagem apresentada durante o espetáculo. De forma holística, o objetivo da investigação foi ajudar a avaliar e documentar algumas das atividades TfD realizadas pela companhia Abibigromma, propor formas pelas quais as instituições, governamentais ou ONGs, podem usar o TfD nos seus projetos educacionais para divulgar informações aos cidadãos e apresentar TfD como uma metodologia educacional recomendada. Os espetáculos da Abibigromma são cheios de significado, os seus conceitos e atividades são amplamente reconhecido e aceites para fins educacionais, de entretenimento e de desenvolvimento, além de proporcionar um objeto de pesquisa, criatividade, experimentação, ensino e aprendizagem tanto para as plataformas educacionais formais como para as informais. Considerando todos os elementos dos espetáculos analisados, que são o centro das atividade da Abibigromma, a companhia exhibe a dinâmica de ensino e aprendizagem e mostra a importância de usar esses elementos na educação. Assim, a experiência real é apropriada pelo estudante que está a ser

educado. É aberta uma oportunidade para o compromisso e participação, observação, pertença, avaliação pessoal, monitorização e avaliação do conhecimento transmitidos ao aluno.

A parte final da investigação aborda os dados recolhidos, os obstáculos que a limitaram e algumas recomendações para investigação futura nesta área. Os resultados da pesquisa mostram que existe a perceção generalizada de que o Tfd é uma abordagem educacional típica de povos indígenas e, portanto, só pode ser usada em comunidades indígenas. No entanto, a maior parte das questões abordadas nas várias comunidades onde Abibigromma apresentou projetos Tfd pode ser encontrada em qualquer nível de desenvolvimento, em qualquer lugar e em qualquer sociedade globalmente. Isso ocorre porque essas questões emanam de erros humanos comuns, independentemente das ações dos indivíduos, falta de conhecimento e desenvolvimento, bem como decisões e perceções erróneas. Esta situação limita a própria pesquisa porque, uma vez que a Abibigromma não possui o projeto RAFiP para assumir continuamente a implementação do projeto de Tfd, foi difícil para os trabalhadores ou artistas da Abibigromma fornecer informações pormenorizadas. Embora a companhia se empenhe na apresentação do Tfd, a estrutura de gestão não envolve trabalhadores e artistas em negociações contratuais. Uma recomendação adicional é, portanto, que o sistema educacional no Gana reveja o currículo e considere a possibilidade de inclusão da estética da performance do Tfd nas abordagens, estratégias, módulos e metodologias de ensino e aprendizagem de forma a promover a diversidade na aquisição e transmissão do conhecimento. Também seria muito positivo se a Universidade de Gana incluísse a companhia Abibigromma no calendário académico da School of Performing Arts para poder implementar programas Tfd também para fins académicos.

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